What's New Newsletter?

Environmentally Sound Cleaning System

The easiest and most cost effective way to clean! These self contained, wall-mounted dispensers accurately measure each dilution using preset metering tips to produce the desired cleaning solutions. No more wasting product, time and money! Each dispenser holds 2 gallons of CitrOxi Concentrate and provides convenient bottle & bucket filling. All you have to do is select the Color.

CitrOxi is one cleaning concentrate used in FOUR different water dilutions. These water dilutions satisfy all general janitorial cleaning needs ceiling to floor.

Natural Solutions is dedicated to creating healthier, more productive indoor environments with lower burdens on our natural resources, while providing products that work. Our commitment to Green Cleaning is more than our business, it is our mission to transform the leaning industry.

Our CitrOxi program offers safer alternatives to standard cleaning systems and programs by reducing indoor air toxicities and eliminating harsh industrial chemicals. Natural Solutions cares about the choices we make in cleaning products, equipment, systems and procedures because they affect our economy and our very lives.

Over-the-Spill Station

Tear off sheet from pad and drop over spill. Absorbs up to 16 oz of liquid, alerts employees to spill and provides more traction until spill is cleaned up.

Slip resistant pads quickly cover spills and alert pedestrians.

- Each yellow pad is coded with universal caution symbol and "Caution Wet Floor" message in English and Spanish.
- Station is constructed of corrugated plastic and mounts on flat surface, easily dispensing medium or large pads.
- Pads are constructed of melt-blown polypropylene for added strength and absorbency.
- Large pad absorbs up to 16 oz. (0.5 kg) of fluid.

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The Fusion™

The Fusion™ dust mop features all the best qualities of microfiber yarn combined with other advantages offered by traditional dust mops. The Fusion™ dust mop features more than 50 times the amount of filament found in traditional mops, which help keep floors cleaner and enhances the overall performance of each dust mop.

Engineered to aggressively collect dust, the Fusion™ filament fibers and looped ends allow for the pick-up of very small or micro particles that ordinary mops will leave behind. The Fusion™ dust mop is a step up from other microfiber mops because it is made with a looped end bottom and fringe yarn along with a sewn construction and increased durability for over 200 washings.

Myers Chemical & Supplies

Get more product info at: www.MyersSupply.com

Micro fibers: Making the Difference

Though prevalent in Europe now for more than 20 years, microfiber technology is still somewhat of a recent phenomenon in the U.S. And, while today it only represents a small percentage of most manufacturers' overall sales, it has, however, taken off as of late. Thanks in part to the education and understanding of more and more end-users, this latest trend in cleaning has lots of customers — and their distributors — making the switch from traditional cleaning products.

Why the growing interest now? The answer is simple: microfiber technology allows workers to clean faster, better and safer than traditional cleaning methods. Mark Hoyle, product manager for Rubbermaid Commercial Products, says that a growing focus on green cleaning has led many to adopt microfiber products and cleaning techniques.

"With tools that are one quarter of the weight of traditional products, microfiber [also] improves worker well-being," says Hoyle. "Independent studies are showing productivity gains as high as forty percent with microfiber. And in response to increasing demand, the product supply is improving; companies are offering a broad line of products, including buckets, wringers and carts."

Progress in productivity

Speaking of increasing productivity, most are also familiar with the term "ergonomics." That word, like microfiber, has crept into the vernacular of today's cleaning professional. And, for good reason. By design, microfiber flat mops require 95 percent less chemicals and water than traditional mops to perform a cleaning task. And, with less solution on the surface, the fewer the number of slip and fall accidents that will occur. Safety is a key selling point to many customers, and when they can continue to get the job done safely with excellence and alleviate the stress with lighter-weight tools, you've got them hooked.

Hoyle says that microfiber makes it easy to clean difficult and time-consuming areas — along baseboards, in corners and around furniture. "A flat mop cleans these areas much more quickly and effectively," he says. "Also, though a traditional mop has more textile, its swipe path is much smaller than an eighteen-inch flat mop. So, a microfiber-based approach to floor cleaning enables the worker to clean more area in a given time span."

Cleaning more area, with less risk of cross contamination, microfiber mops can also be laundered and used again and again. "The best traditional mops withstand no more than fifty launderings," contends Hoyle, "but microfiber mops last for over three hundred … more than six times longer than their [counterparts]." These durable products reduce landfill pressure as well, saving more money and the environment at the same time.

The microfiber boom has been realized in the healthcare sector more so than any other. But other segments, such as education, food service and retail, are also catching on to the microfiber movement. Cost-wise, microfiber products may have a more substantial up-front investment, but when one measures in the extended life-cycle of the products, their reduction in chemical usage, durability and increased worker productivity, these minimal dollars on the front end could potentially turn into savings in the long run. "The University of Tennessee, partnering with Rubbermaid Commercial Products, is currently involved in a study to quantify these savings," says Hoyle.

More than mops

Tough a large portion of microfiber sales in the U.S. comes from mops, they are not the only products using the technology. The microfiber product offering has grown exponentially in recent years, with manufacturers selling everything you can imagine: wet pads, dry/dust pads, cloths and wipers, mitts, dusters … and the list goes on and on. But, it doesn't stop there.

The advent of microfiber is also changing traditional buckets and wringers, mop handles and frames too. Touting the "no-touch" capabilities of wringing microfiber mops, savvy manufacturers are catching on and have developed buckets with unique features and benefits based on completing the microfiber cleaning system.

By John Lynn

Microfiber Care Guidelines

Laundering

* Do not use strong alkaline detergents — above pH 11.
* Do not use Chlorine Bleach. Oxygen Bleach can be used as an alternative.
* Do not use fabric softener.
* Laundering equipment should be loaded to capacity.
* Follow all recommendations on product labels.

Drying

* High heat is not needed to dry synthetic pads as moisture is held on the surface in “nooks and crannies” of the fiber as opposed to soaking into the fiber, like cotton.
* Drying at high temperatures will decrease the product life.
* Set temperature below 140 degrees F, at low setting.
* Limit drying time to prevent over-drying.
* Promptly remove pads from dryer when cycle is complete.

Green Group of the Month: ISSA

The proliferation of green products exhibited at the 2006 ISSA/INTERCLEAN Exhibition and Trade show left no doubt about the commitment and power of the ISSA to green the cleaning industry. The same holds true for the ISSA’s recent announcement that it will produce a special edition of the book “Green Cleaning For Dummies” for commercial or institutional cleaning operations. Another example is that a search for “green cleaning” on the ISSA website uncovers a list of more than 300 related articles.

By selecting ISSA be the “Green Group of the Month,” The Ashkin Group recognizes the organization for wielding unmatched influence in supporting the green movement through its events, seminars, educational resources, publications and much more.

Green Seal Outlines New Cleaning Standard

Green Seal recently completed the first standard for services provided to clean buildings. With this now in effect, service providers can become certified under GS-42, Green Seal's Environmental Standard for Cleaning Services for reduced toxicity, waste, and exposure.

"This standard seeks to encourage both in-house and external cleaning services to establish a green cleaning program that protects human health and the environment," said Arthur Weissman, Ph.D.,
Green Seal President and CEO.

For the purposes of this standard, green cleaning encompasses all indoor activities typically required to clean commercial, public, and industrial buildings. And because it defines an environmentally responsible cleaning service, the standard could be used as the basis for verification as well as certification. Thus GS-42 provides a market incentive to service providers to offer environmentally responsible cleaning services and a clear, reliable tool for purchasers to determine which services are environmentally responsible.

The standard specifies green chemicals, supplies and equipment as well as cleaning procedures and mandates employee training and communication with building owners and occupants. It requires that a building-specific Green Cleaning Plan be implemented. To verify compliance, Green Seal will conduct on-site audits that may include the cleaning service provider's own facilities, as well as a sample of the facilities cleaned by the service.

Helping to Control Asthma in Schools Today Using a 'Clean Vacuuming' Program

Schools all across the United States share not only an educational mission, but the reality of asthma. In a classroom of 30 children, two are likely to have asthma, which is the leading chronic cause of school absenteeism.

Asthma presents a host of issues to entire school populations. It can impact each classroom, students' ability to learn, visits to nurses' offices, teacher productivity, absenteeism, and many others. Schools, however, can help ease asthma's impact by creating an "asthma-friendly" environment, including good indoor air quality (IAQ).

Asthma can be life-threatening if it is not properly managed. The lungs of people with asthma are excessively sensitive to various "triggers" that cause asthma attacks, which result in narrowed airways and other changes, causing difficulty breathing. Asthma never goes away, but it can be controlled. When students' asthma is controlled, it won't interfere with normal daily activities, and asthma attacks are minimized. Everyone with asthma-including those with mild asthma-should avoid their known triggers.

At school, students may be exposed to several triggers on a daily basis. Individuals' triggers can include seasonal and pet allergens, outdoor air pollution, viruses, and indoor air irritants like microscopic particles found in dust, dirt, dust mites, and cockroach antigens. Some triggers like cat dander and other allergens enter the school environment on students and staff who have pets at home.

"Asthma-Friendly" School Environments

Avoiding triggers can make a great difference in a child's day-to-day asthma control. Schools nationwide are becoming more involved in proactively creating asthma-friendly environments to best support students with asthma and minimize asthma's affect on a school's daily rhythms. Asthma-friendly activities present a holistic approach throughout many elements of school infrastructure and curriculum, including creating a healthy environment.

The National Asthma Education and Prevention Program How Asthma-Friendly Is Your School? assessment includes two environmental questions: Does the school maintain good indoor air quality? Does it reduce or eliminate allergens and irritants that can make asthma worse? The American Lung Association's Asthma-Friendly Schools Initiative provides a wide-range of tested advice for schools to help create "Asthma Friendly Schools." To improve air quality in the school itself, the Lung Association recommends all schools use the Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools kit that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed with the help of the Lung Association. The easy-to-use checklists in the Tools for Schools kit not only help reduce asthma triggers, but improve air quality for all teachers and students alike.

Reducing or eliminating students' exposure to triggers like pet dander, dust mites, and microscopic dust particles is not a simple piece of the environmental puzzle. The most effective way is to keep as many of those sources of pollution outside of the school. Once those allergens and irritants are inside, however, students can benefit from a comprehensive cleaning protocol that incorporates the most effective means of removing them from the environment.

Keeping Asthma Triggers Down

One simple way to help keep dirt and other particles out of the classroom is to have large entry mats at all entrances that can let children track off much of the soil before they get far into the school. Vacuuming exterior entrance walkways can also help prevent allergenic particles from being tracked into buildings.

Finding & Attacking Asthma Triggers: "Clean Vacuuming"

Many allergens and irritants eventually will settle on hard surfaces and carpeting throughout the school. Carpet is a well-known "sink" for dirt, animal dander, pollen, dust mites, and other asthma triggers, but these same triggers also can be found on hard flooring, which now comprises about 69 per cent of space in new K-12 facilities projects.

A "clean vacuuming" strategy can help schools reduce asthma triggers by removing (rather than redistributing) the dust in a building by vacuuming surfaces with an efficiently filtered vacuum cleaner.

Effective vacuuming is not simple — unless buildings staff understand the basics. Keep these basics in mind:

- Asthma triggers often come in tiny particles, like pollen and pet dander. Many of these particles cannot be seen without a microscope, so staff cannot use visible dust alone as a criterion for whether or not the vacuuming program is effectively capturing asthma triggers. Some particles settle in carpet and on hard surfaces. The goal is to remove particles from carpet and other surfaces without putting them back into the air.

- Any movement across flooring-including the movement of a vacuum cleaner-kicks tiny particles into the air. Some of the smallest particles, like cat dander, can spread through a room easily. Be aware that some vacuum cleaners spread these asthma triggers, rather than removing them, because they cannot trap particles.
- Vacuum carpets and hard floors frequently and thoroughly to help limit the allergens and dirt particles indoors. Always vacuum only after all students have left the building.

Some vacuum systems are effective and can reduce allergens and other triggers. Understanding the elements that can translate into "clean vacuuming" is critical to improving a building's IAQ and creating an asthma-friendly school environment. Choose and use a vacuum system that effectively captures fine particles, including a range of asthma triggers, and minimizes particles being reintroduced into the air.

Vacuum Cleaner ABC's

A vacuum cleaner is a system of four interrelated components that should result in high "particles in-particles out" (particles in — removes the most particles from the surface, particles out — releases the fewest particles back into the air) efficiency. To achieve clean vacuuming, a vacuum needs excellent filtration with a properly sized and sealed filter system that uses the appropriate filter.

- Airflow: volume of air moving through the vacuum (usually described by manufacturers in cubic feet per minute). Air-flow affects the amount of soil that can be carried along and contained in vacuum's filtration.
- Lift: ability of the vacuum's airflow to lift dirt (typically measured in "inches of lift")
- Filtration: capturing of soils, mainly responsible for reducing "particles out". Filtration must be designed to work with airflow and lift so that the particles are stopped, but not the airflow.
- Design: mechanical elements that can enhance or reduce airflow or allow dust to pass by a filter without being caught (for example, gaps in the vacuum body that allow dust to leak from non-filter areas.)

A note about filtration systems: Filtration systems involve bags and filters, and commercial vacuum manufacturers typically described efficiency in percentage of particles removed. Testing and reporting, however, are not standardized, so manufacturers' claims can be tough to compare. Some elements to keep in mind:

- Microns: This measurement of particles (1 micron = 1 millionth of a meter) often is used in promoting particle removal. To put things in perspective, your hair is about 70 microns in diameter and, without magnification, you can only see particles that are about 10 microns or larger.
- Bags: The amount of dust that can escape varies greatly, even among microfilter bags, but some microfilter bags capture nearly 2400 per cent more dust than singly-ply bags. Microfilter bags have greater media density that allows them to capture far more fine dust.
- Filters: Layered microfilters have been shown to greatly increase vacuum efficiency. "Electrostatic" microfilters use positively — and negatively — charged fibers that capture charged particles in the air passing through the filter. High efficiency particle air (HEPA) filters have also been shown to be effective at removing allergens and particles indoors.

What Schools Can Do

A clean vacuuming strategy will help schools minimize or eliminate students' exposure to allergens and irritants that are known asthma triggers. Vacuuming carpets and hard floors frequently and thoroughly with an efficient vacuum system can remove allergens and fine particles from the school environment.

Selecting a vacuum system for clean vacuuming can be complicated. Comparing various manufacturers' test results, which are not standardized across the vacuum cleaner industry, is like comparing apples to oranges. Take the time to understand which elements will help you vacuum more cleanly and improve air quality for all students and staff.

When selecting a system:

- Research vacuum systems as much as possible to assess which offer the best quality in terms of airflow and filtration, as well as design best suited to maintenance staff.
- Ask manufacturers questions and request documentation for any health and performance claims.
- Request independent test data regarding filtration, airflow, and efficiency. Specifically, ask for test data to determine the quantity and size of dust particles captured.
- Check references to validate claims.
- Select a unit with high-efficiency filters such as micro filter or HEPA media, good suction, and sealed construction.

ASHRAE / USGBC / IESNA Form Committee to Begin Development of Baseline Green Building Standard

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC); the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE); and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) have completed formation of the committee charged with the development of Standard 189P, the ASHRAE/USGBC/IESNA minimum standard for high performance green building. The proposed green building standard is being developed by the three organizations to help drive green building into mainstream building practices and is scheduled for completion in 2007.

"We expect the new baseline standard to set a higher floor for all building practices and really bring green to the mainstream, " John Hogan, chair of the committee writing the standard, said. "The benefits of green building -- clean indoor air, thermal comfort and resource efficiency ˆ are benefits that are owed to everyone and as an ANSI-accredited standards developer, we ,re confident the process we ,re following to develop this standard will make it well-received in the building community. "

The proposed standard will apply to new commercial buildings and major renovation projects. It will address sustainable sites, water use, energy efficiency, a building's impact on the atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. The goal of Standard 189P is to eventually get the language written into building code.

USGBC,s President, CEO & Founding Chair Rick Fedrizzi notes that USGBC's mission is market transformation and "Standard 189P is a significant step in that direction ; the combined expertise of ASHRAE, IESNA, and USGBC will raise the floor for building practices nationwide."

"IESNA welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with ASHRAE and USGBC in multidisciplinary sharing of innovative solutions to create environments that are sustainable, efficient, healthy and productive,‰ according to Kevin Flynn, AIA, President, Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

Using USGBC's LEED green building rating system, which addresses the top 25% of building practice, as a key resource, Standard 189 will provide a baseline that will drive green building into mainstream building practices. Concurrent with this initiative, USGBC will begin work on LEED version 3.0, which will encompass major advancements in building science and technology, such as LifeCycle Assessment and bioregional weighting. Standard 189 will be designed to serve the entire building market whereas LEED will continue to evolve and serve the innovators and market leaders.

The newly formed committee met in Seattle in August to outline next steps, including two development meetings before the end of the year.

"ASHRAE looks forward to continuing its work with USGBC and IESNA in providing guidance to help professionals design, build and operate the best buildings we possibly can," said Terry Townsend, P.E., ASHRAE president.